GFC/IC.1/Bureau.7/1

Distr.: Limited
18 June 2025
English only

Bureau of the Global Framework on Chemicals –
For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste
Monday, 19 May 2025, 14:00 – 16:30 (CET, Geneva time) (ONLINE)
Seventh meeting

DRAFT REPORT OF THE SEVENTH MEETING OF THE BUREAU

1. Opening and welcome

1. The Vice-President of the Bureau of the International Conference of the Global Framework on Chemicals, Mr. Santos Virgilio welcomed the Bureau members to the seventh meeting of the Bureau. Mr. Virgilio presided over the meeting in the absence of the President Shamimi.

2. Adoption of the agenda

2. The Vice-President introduced the provisional agenda for the meeting (GFC/IC.1/Bureau.7/1) that was circulated on 6 May 2025. The Bureau members were invited to raise any additional points under agenda item 8, Any other business.

3. Ms. Susan Wilburn asked whether a discussion on the multistakeholder day could be included in agenda item 4. The secretariat agreed to provide an update.

4. With no further items raised, the provisional agenda was adopted.

3. Adoption of the report of the sixth meeting of the Bureau of the Global Framework on Chemicals, held on 30 January 2025

5. The Vice-President invited comments on the draft report of the sixth meeting of the Bureau, which was held on 30 January 2025 and the report of which was circulated by the secretariat on 28 February 2025.

6. The secretariat informed that no comments were received following the report's circulation. With no additional comments, the report was adopted and will be posted on the Global Framework on Chemicals' website.

4. First meeting of the GFC Open-ended Working Group, 24-27 June 2025, Punta del Este, Uruguay

a. Documents

7. The Vice-President invited the secretariat to take the floor. The secretariat informed the Bureau that copies of all working documents were uploaded six weeks in advance on the GFC OEWG website. The secretariat indicated that it is currently reaching to obtain further information through liaising with document owners. Translation of the working documents into six languages is in process, as per requested by the Bureau.

8. The Vice-President opened the floor for any comments from members of the Bureau. Ms. Sara Brosche asked what the deadline for submitting inf documents from stakeholders would be. The secretariat clarified that ideally by six weeks in advance, since it would not be helpful for participants if they come very late. Stakeholders should be encouraged to submit documents as soon as possible so that they can be uploaded on the website.

b. Logistics

9. The secretariat provided an update about its work in close collaboration with the government of Uruguay in the organization of the OEWG, including all the details that are being considered to put everything in place, including through meetings with the host country.

10. With regards to registration of participants, the secretariat explained that there are currently 688 approved participants to the OEWG and 89 delegates approved for travel funding, some attending both SPP and GFC meetings, and another 22 that will attend Board meetings. It noted that there are 35 governments that have not registered yet, mainly from Africa, Asia-Pacific, Eastern Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

11. On the question of whether the secretariat should reach out to those governments, Mr. Napoleon Garcia asked if it would be possible to have the list of those countries shared with Bureau members so that they could reach out with their respective regions and try to motivate them to register.

12. On travel of funded participants, the secretariat indicated that there are participants who have been nominated by SPP but that GFC secretariat cannot approve for funding for the time being. Travel requests are being processed this week and the secretariat expects to have up to 50% of tickets issued by end of this week and the remaining ones the following week.

13. Ms. Sara Brosché shared feedback from their constituency on some confusion from participants wanting to attend both SPP and GFC meetings as to whether they had actually registered for all of them, since there are several forms to fill in. Therefore, some participants may think they are registered while they are actually not. The secretariat agreed that this is an unfortunate situation, but several

registration forms were necessary due to the fact that there are different meetings and some of them will be back-to-back.

14. Bureau members then raised the issue of visas and whether the host country will be issuing exemption letters. The secretariat explained that it is collecting requests for visa exemption letters and so far has shared some 300 requests with the government of Uruguay, who has already sent out 180 letters to participants, with more to come in the upcoming days. Uruguayan authorities will also share the list of visa-exempted delegates with IATA so that airlines are duly informed. Deadline for submitting visa exemption letter requests to the Uruguayan government is Friday 30th May.

15. Mr. Lamin Jaiteh requested whether participants can be copied when the government of Uruguay notifies the airlines, so as to avoid situations of missing communications at the airport and potential changes of flight tickets, among other issues. The secretariat agreed to follow up with Uruguayan authorities on this request.

16. Ms. Susan Wilburn enquired how registration of outstanding travel dates for participants also attending the IOMC workshop is reflected in Indico. The secretariat explained that, once itineraries proposed by travel agents are received, they are shared with participants for confirmation, and any personal deviations should be indicated to the travel agent. Mr. Bob Diderich agreed on the possibility for participants to arrive a day earlier and that it would be helpful that this is reflected in the Indico form. The secretariat noted that, for participants not attending neither SPP nor GFC OEWGs, travel will be within the IP.1 workshop days and IOMC will only cover daily subsistence allowance.

c. Proposed contact groups and co-chairs

17. The secretariat introduced the names of the two Co-Chairs who were proposed to chair the OEWG, one being Premsyl Stepanek from Czechia and the other one Vanessa Aliaga Araujo from Peru. Pending approval by the Bureau, they were available and ready to guide the work of the OEWG. Bureau members agreed with the proposed Co-Chairs. The secretariat then informed that unfortunately President Shamimi will not be present at the OEWG, and that they have reached out to ask whether an alternate from the government of Pakistan will be attending.

18. In terms of contact groups, the secretariat indicated that they foresee 3 to 4 contact groups at the moment. The first one is on emerging policy issues and issues of concern, and the secretariat is looking at having a representative from Bosnia and Herzegovina. For the second one (implementation arrangements), the secretariat has a couple of choices and might call Lamin Jaiteh from the Gambia, and also Linda Kosgei from Kenya. The secretariat is still looking for somebody from the WEOG region, if possible. For the third contact group (programme of work and budget), the secretariat has one representative from Antigua and Barbuda, Jonah Ormond, and is still looking for another representative.

19. The secretariat invited Bureau members to reach out if they think there is anybody that could be nominated who has already been engaged, especially for implementation arrangements.

20. With concerns to break out sessions, the secretariat explained that Santos Virgilio from Angola and Ivo de Zwaan from the Netherlands will be leading one on the Fund, whereas Itsuki Kuroda from Japan will be leading another one on measurability. It is expected that there could be other discussions happening on topics such as gender action plan, for example. On the question of when these sessions will be closed, the secretariat indicated that very shortly, if possible before the end of the week.

21. Ms. Sara Brosché enquired about practical arrangements at the meeting. She indicated that the venue is quite hard to get to and asked if there are any conversations with the government of Uruguay on e.g. buses from/to airport and to/from venue so that participants do not need to rely on taxis. The secretariat replied that there have indeed been conversations with the government of Uruguay on this matter and that this is an ongoing discussion.

22. Ms. Susan Wilburn asked about the contact group on implementation programmes, in particular whether small group discussions on Thursday as part of the multistakeholder group on the implementation programmes will be factored in or included in deliberations. The secretariat indicated that, since the OEWG is a steppingstone to the International Conference, some of the terms of reference will certainly be discussed and discussions on Thursday will be considered.

23. On whether there will be a report back from the three breakout groups that will be put forward to the plenary, the secretariat noted that reporting arrangements are being looked into, including how to optimize reporting and attaching it to the meeting report so that content is not lost.

24. With regards to the multistakeholder day, the secretariat gave an overview, referring to lunchtime activities being firmed out and concept notes being available for most. Since activities are not scheduled in parallel, it is expected that plenty of people will have opportunity to attend. The secretariat is also making sure there will be spillover rooms, since all these events will be hybrid, and is working very closely with IOMC. On the workshops and webinars, leads have been identified for most sessions and progress is being made. There will be cross-cutting themes, events with youth, construction, labour and more detailed sector programmes such as textiles, electronics and the health sector. The secretariat advised to reach out to Delena Indar from UNITAR if Bureau members believe that anything else needs to be included.

25. On Susan Wilburn's comment about how to circulate information on the multistakeholder day and the role of civil society, such as the health sector through WHO, the secretariat indicated that they have been encouraging everyone to reach out to a wide stakeholder base. There are nominated individuals from international organizations that will have a focal area and also have leads from other areas. The secretariat would welcome any suggestions from Bureau members in case they may

wish to encourage more engagement, even though they are quite comfortable that civil society is well represented.

d. Funding

26. The secretariat introduced the programme of work that is available online and advised that there will be a contact group for this subject. There is a funding gap already in 2025 and there will be a more pronounced one in 2026, which affects the funding situation for staff and vacancies, whereas the GFC Fund financial situation is in better shape. This demonstrates the need for a deep discussion on the sustainability of the secretariat and will be an important subject to discuss amongst all the membership at the OEWG. Given that the secretariat does not receive assessed contributions and has no sustainability in its funding, it is currently dedicating significant resources to look at how to mobilize resources differently. Unless new ways of financing are put in place, the secretariat will not be in a position to employ more staff or appropriately hold international meetings.

27. The secretariat provided an overview on resource mobilization both for the secretariat and the Fund. It highlighted that, without adequate and predictable funding, the Fund will not have longevity, but also there cannot be a sustainable and effective secretariat, since the two of them are deeply interlinked. The Fund exists to support implementation of the framework by financing projects, and the secretariat exists to service the International Conference, its subsidiary bodies and to ensure that all the resolutions and decisions are managed, coordinated and guided through their implementation, including all the technical support, but also fiduciary oversight and donor engagement.

28. The dual track strategy that is being pursued was further explained. It consists firstly in engagement with government donors, and secondly, in outreach to non-governmental actors, particularly philanthropic foundations, and on that side a comprehensive donor intelligence mapping exercise has been conducted as the first step on the engagement with these non-government actors. The Secretariat has analyzed over 60 institutions globally that belong to this group of philanthropic organizations. Based on this review, it has identified those that are more aligned to the mandate of the GFC, the geographic interest and the funding priorities. With this information, 21 foundations were prioritized. As a result, a targeted outreach is now being conducted to, inter alia, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Oak Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, the Vessels Earth Fund, the IKEA Foundation, the UBS Optimus Foundation, based in Switzerland, as well as the Hans Wilsdorf Foundation and the Rolex Foundation, also based in Geneva. Five of them have initially been contacted and tailored proposals are being prepared to attempt to get their interest and receive some financial support.

29. The Secretariat noted the importance of acknowledging that engaging with philanthropic foundations is a medium to long term effort, because it requires relationship building first and soft entry points before we can move on with more formal proposals. It is therefore essential to diversify the donor base, which will demand sustained efforts and also time. And that is why in parallel the team is also trying to engage with government donors, including those that have fiscal years that are ending soon, and reach out to see if they have still unspent funding. The

secretariat and secretariat plan to expand this stream in the coming months through targeted outreach after the OEWG and have some more indications and directions of where we are heading before the 1st International Conference. The GFC will also try to develop concept notes and strategic communication products that will help approach these government donors.

30. The secretariat respectfully appealed to all Bureau members so that they could also actively support in these resource mobilization efforts, considering that Bureau members are uniquely positioned to help mobilize resources by first advocating within their own administrations for financial support, whether through direct contributions or by encouraging development cooperation agencies in their countries to engage, including beyond formal channels. The secretariat noted that their regional visibility and influence can help and concluded that it is open to suggestions or ideas that Bureau members may have on how best to address these resource mobilization efforts.

5. Update on the planned meeting of the GFC Fund (26-28 May 2025)

31. The secretariat provided an update on the upcoming Executive Board meeting of the Fund, which is taking from 26 to 28 May in hybrid format. The Executive Board held the first session of the third meeting in March 2025, where a significant number of applications received under the first round were reviewed. Out of over 105 applications received, 83 eligible ones were identified for further review and appraisal from the Executive Board members. Due to the unexpectedly high volume of eligible proposals, the Board was unable to complete the review and decision making during the first session in March. In order to finalize the review process and make the decisions on the funding of those applications that the Board would consider moving forward with, they agreed to reconvene for a second session.

32. The secretariat clarified that the primary objective of the upcoming session is to conclude the approval process for the first round of funding, including the review of applications that were not addressed in March and also of those that were invited to submit revisions or refinements for consideration at the second session. The secretariat emphasized that the Board had acknowledged that there is no obligation to approve a large number of project proposals. The focus is to identify a small number of high quality but also high impact projects, as this first round will serve as a pilot and an opportunity to test and refine the Fund application guidelines and review procedures.

33. The Fsecretariat further explained that the second session of the Executive Board meeting will also look at the launch of the second round of the Fund. This will be a moment for Board members to reflect on the lessons learned from the first round and to consider the draft proposal for the process that will guide the launch of the next round, which will include potential adjustments to funding priorities. Finally, another agenda item is the adoption of a policy on delays in project implementation, including contingencies for multi-country projects and agreement on timeline and location of the next board meeting.

34. Both the secretariat and the Executive Board hope that by the end of the meeting there will be a decision on which projects will move forward with funding,

and that an announcement can be made at the OEWG in that regard. Prior to the beginning of the OEWG there will be an afternoon with two technical briefings, including one on measurability and another one on the GFC Fund, where there will be an opportunity to reflect on the first round.

35. Mr. Rory O'Neill expressed the view that the Fund operates as a subsidiary body to the Bureau and to the GFC and emphasized the importance of clarifying the relationship and nature of the Fund. He also highlighted the importance of taking account of any limitations in accessibility to the Fund due to organizational difficulties, such as trade unions or regional applications. The secretariat took note of these concerns and reassured that it will be up to the Executive Board to decide together, with feedback from everyone else, on a proposal on the way forward for the International Conference.

36. Ms. Susan Wilburn reemphasized what was previously mentioned about redistribution by sectors and stakeholders of approved proposals. Since the goal is to have a small number of high quality and high impact proposals, she was of the view that the first round is an opportunity for the Fund to demonstrate the multisector and multistakeholder nature of the GFC, and how it is different from any other environmental, health or labour instrument.

6. Report on the meeting of the open-ended ad hoc group on measurability (April 2025)

37. The secretariat indicated that there is unfortunately no full report available of the meeting on the open-ended ad hoc group on measurability yet and invited Ms. Itsuki Kuroda as Co-Chair to provide any high-level views. The secretariat committed to circulate the report of the meeting as soon as available.

38. Ms. Kuroda provided an update on the meeting that took place on 16 April 2025. She explained that there are three work streams within the measurability group, and they have been effectively and successfully working to identify possible indicators to measure progress towards the GFC target. The recent development was that an agreement was reached on the interim criteria and the factsheet to identify appropriate indicators. She further noted that, in order to start measuring progress, the indicators that are actually measurable need to be identified, with reliable custodians who know where data is and can update it regularly. Therefore, being able to agree on the interim criteria and the factsheet was a positive step in April.

39. Ms. Kuroda noted that, with regards to the OEWG, the measurability group will be given an hour for a technical briefing on Monday, where they will share the current state of work with a wider audience. Additionally, there will be some time for breakout groups where there will be in-person exchange of views, but there will be no negotiation or discussion on indicators. For the agenda, two topics were agreed upon in the previous meeting in April, the first one being the next step between the OEWG and the International Conference in 2026 and the second one how the outcome from the majority group would look like. This would include how to go about the reporting format and also how to present progress virtually to the public. As for specific indicators such as HHPs, although there is a strong interest and a need for major progress, she acknowledged that the measurability group does not

have the expertise and noted that, to this end, there will be masterclass from the Global Alliance on HHPs planned on Tuesday, and also one on chemical footprint on Thursday. She strongly encouraged that specific discussions take place by using both dedicated platforms.

7. Next meetings of the Bureau

40. The secretariat proposed to hold the eighth meeting of the Bureau after the OEWG, date to be agreed upon. It further transmitted a request from IOMC participating organizations, who would like to have an informal meeting with Bureau members in the margins of the OEWG, possibly in the evening of Monday 23rd June. This was generally agreed by the Bureau.

41. Mr. Bob Diderich further explained that the meeting between the Bureau and the IOMC would be an opportunity to outline the specificities of each participating organization. Ms. Magdalena Frydrych agreed with this proposal and expressed that it could be valuable.

8. Any other business

42. The Vice-President invited Bureau members to introduce any other requests under this item. There were no further comments neither from Bureau members nor from the secretariat.

9. Closure of the meeting

31. The Vice-President thanked all Bureau members for their participation at the sixth Bureau meeting and closed the meeting at 15:00 CEST.

Annex

Participants

Bureau Members: Mr. Santos Virgilio (Angola, Africa), Ms. Magdalena Frydrych (Poland, Central and Eastern Europe), Ms. Jenny Skytte (Norway, Western Europe and Others).

Regional Focal Points: Mr. Lamin Jaiteh (the Gambia for Africa), Ms. Itsuki Kuroda (Japan for Asia - Pacific), Mr. Napoleon Garcia (El Salvador for Latin America and the Caribbean), and Mr. Ivo de Zwaan (The Netherlands for Western Europe and Other Groups).

Representatives of non-governmental participants and the IOMC: Ms. Chrysanthi Sofokleous (International Council of Chemical Associations, industry), Ms. Sara Brosché (International Pollutants Elimination Network, public interest group), Mr. Bob Diderich (OECD, IOMC), Ms. Susan Wilburn (School of Public Health, University of Cape Town, health), and Mr. Rory O'Neill (Australian Council of Trade Unions, labour).

Regrets: Mr. Hammad Shamimi (Pakistan, Asia-Pacific, President), Ms. Vanessa Aliaga (Peru, Latin American and the Caribbean), Mr. Audun Heggelund (Norway, Western Europe and Others), Ms. Suzana Andonova (North Macedonia for Central and Eastern Europe).